

A LETTER
TO A REVEREND
MINISTER
OF THE
G O S P E L,
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN PERSWASION.

Edinburgh, 4th. March 1689.

Reverend Sir,

WHEN in the Doctrinal Truths of the Reformed Religion, and in the substantial parts of Divine Worship, all sober Protestants of Episcopal and Presbyterian persuasion are firmly united together; Our sad Divisions about Ecclesiastick Government (which have these many years mischieved us) are certainly inconsistent with the Gospel of Peace and Love, subservient to Popery; which would swallow us up quick: and scandalous to all thinking Men without the Church. Let me therefore conjure you by the bloody Wounds of our holy Mother, who receiv- ed us by one Baptism, unto the profession of one Lord, and one Faith, that when the Episcopal Clergy, are of reconciling Inclinations you neglect not this Opportunity, of shewing your Abhorrence of wilful Separation. And that my fervent pursuance after peace, may have the Honour to Contribute in any way for so happy an Accommodation amongst Christian Brethren, pray suffer me in all that tender Compassion that becometh a Minister of Salvation by a dying Saviour, to put you in Remembrance, of those three certain Matters of Fact. First, That the Representative Church of Scotland never confess'd any Divine Rights in Presbytery. 2dly. That the Solemn League did never abjure the presbyterian Bishop, Regulated by Canons; and bal-

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lanced by assisting *Presbyters*. 2dly, that the Reverend *Ministers* in *England*, for providing against Violation of that *Covenant*, petitioned for such an *Episcopacy*, as is liker to our present Establishment, then any other seen by the *Christian World* these thousand Years.

First, The Representative Church of *Scotland* never confess'd any Divine Right in *Presbytry*, since the blessed Reformation: Of her Confessions we have but two; The 1st. in K. James 6. Reign avoweth in 19th Art about the *Notes* of Holy Church that Ecclesiastical Discipline is rightly Administrat as Gods words prescribe, whereby Vice is Repressed and Vertue Nourished; and lest it should be imagined that *Presbytery* can only afford such a Discipline, The 21st Art avoweth that no Politie can be appointed for all Ages, Times and Places; and after all Church Government is thus left of Humane Institution. In the 25th Article the Civil Magistrate is confess't to have the special Power in settling it; Therefore the other Confession made at *Westminster* by being Voiced too, by the Commissioners sent from this, and afterwards approved by the General Assembly here, it is Adopted into this National Church of *Scotland*; and the 23rd Chap^r thereof Asserts the Supreme Civil Magistrate, his Power of establishing the External Politie of the Church; yea and the General Assembly in the 24th Approbation of that Confession, for all its Protestation: That the 31st Ch^r ancient Synods and Councils should not inroach upon the Intrinsic Power of the Church, takes no notice of the Presbyterian Government hath a Divine Institution.

Secondly, The Solemn League did not Abjure the President Bishop, Regulated by Canons, and ballanced by assisting *Presbyters*. For since the General Assembly here in *Scotland* by Her Acts, acknowledgeth that the Solemn League stricks against the same *Episcopacy*, against which the National Covenant was Levell'd; Then the single Judgment of the Royal Martyr (The best Protestant and Casuist of his time) about the sense of the National Covenant which had the Authority to impose it, must doubleless weigh down the Opinion of all the Diffusive Church in *Brittain*, in this Question; and the World knows that his Princely desire of a Regulation always hated the Destruction of *Episcopacy*. Then for the Church Representative of both Kingdoms, neither the Synod of *Westminster*, in Her Directory for Church Government, nor the General Assembly here convened in her Art of Approbation of that Directory, do any thing in Condemnation of a President Bishop.

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But 3dly. The Reverend Ministers of the Presbyterian perswasion in England petitioned Anno 1561. The late K. *Charles* the 2d. for such an *Episcopacy* as is liker our present Establishment in *Scotland*, then any other seen by the *Christian World* these 1000. years. Their Petitions are Printed in two papers of proposals, in which they insist upon the form of *Synodical Government* conjunct with a fixed presidency, according to *Archbishop Ushers* Reduction; and the last Motive inducing them to desire such a Government, is plainly this in Words, *That it will save the Nation from the Violation of the Solemn Vow and Covenant, without wronging the Church at all, or breaking any other Oath.* Now Reverend Brother, you know as well as my self, that the foresaid Reduction by that most Reverend *Primate of all Ireland*; is liker our *Episcopal Government*, considering its Nature, then hath ever been enjoyed in any National Church since the Blessing of a Reformation: Yea, so very like in the Weekly Session, Monthly presbytrie, and *Diocesan Synods*, that with a due Modification, whereunto the Regular Clergy will be found complying, you would not be able to tell the Difference: Therefore beseeching the *Amb. of Peace* and *Lover of Concord*, that all of us of *Episcopal* and *Presbyterian* perswasion, having One LORD, one Faith, one Baptism, may be brought to be all of one Mind, and Judgement, perfectly joyning together, without all Divisions in our Lord *JESUS CHRIST*, In whom I rest, though unknown as yet,

Rev. Brs.

Your Affectionate Servant, &c.

If the long Letter displease, pray let my good Will be forgiven, but if you think these Considerations by GODS Grace, can be useful for a Reconcilement, I give you Liberty to publish them.